THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) Few instances of illegal excavation and smuggling of precious and semi-precious stones in the districts of Kalahandi and Bolangir of Orissa have come to notice of the State Government of Orissa during the last three years. Report of illegal mining of moon stone (cat's eye) has been received from Koderma area of Bihar by the State Government of Bihar.

(b) There is no restrictions on inter-state movement of precious stones.

(c) No, Sir.

Closure of Mica Mines in Bihar

193. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) what was the total number of mica mines in Bihar a decade ago ;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of MICA mines in Bihar and adjoining States have been lying closed since long ;

(c) the number of mica mines operational at present in Bihar ;

(d) whether Government have enquired into the reasons for their closure as well as the steps needed for their revival ; and

(e) if so, the details of measures both short-term and long-term being contemplated, if any, by Govenment for reviving the mica mines in Bihar and other areas ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI BALRAM SINGH YADAV) : (a) During 1982, there were 136 working mica mines in Bihar.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) At present, the number of working mica mines in Bihar is 50.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The main reasons identified for closure of mica mines are : lack of demand in the international market, substitution of mica and its product, and the deeper mines becoming operationally viable.

Revival of this industry can be through production of value-added items like mica paper and mica based insulated materials, identification of new export markets for Indian mica and its products, technological improvement and diversification of mica and mica products.

"इस्को" का निजीकरण

194. **श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह** : क्या इस्पात मंत्री 6 अगस्त, 1993 को राज्य सभा में तारांकित प्रश्न 174 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) सरकार द्वारा "इस्को" बर्नपुर के निजीकरण के मामले में अब तक आगे क्या कार्यवाही की गयी है, और

(ख) क्या कुछ व्यक्तियों/संगठनों द्वारा "इस्को" के निजीकरण के विरोध का प्रयास किया जा रहा है, और यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ?

इस्पात मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (संतोष मोहन देव) : (क) यह मामला अभी सरकार के विचाराधीन है ।

(ख) विभिन्न केन्द्रीय श्रमिक संगठनों ने "इस्को" में निजी भागीदारी का विरोध किया है । अगस्त, 1993 में पश्चिम बंगाल राज्य विधानसभा का एक सर्वदलीय शिष्ट-मंडल इस्पात मंत्री से मिला और उसने मांग की कि "इस्को" का आधुनिकीकरण स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया लिमिटेड (सेल) द्वारा निजी भागीदारी के बिना किया जाए ।

Closure of Mini Steel Plant

195. SHRI P. UPENDRA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of mini steel plants have recently been closed down due

to high cost of imported scrap and increase in power rates;

(b) the number if such steel plants which have been closed down during the last one year; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to help the secondary steel sector to survive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) The performance of mini steel plants (electric arc furnace units) has been affected due to various factors such as demand recession, shortage of power and increase in input costs including rise in international scrap prices. It is reported that 14 such units closed during the calendar year 1992 and another 15 units have closed during the calendar year 1993 (upto September, 1993). The Industry has represented for various reliefs and the proposals made are under the consideration of Goverment.

Private Sector Participation in Steel Industry

196. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
SHRI GOVINDRAO RAMRAO ADIK:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that greater private sector participation is being envisaged by Government in the steel industry;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details and the extent of private sector participation envisaged?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) Due to resource constraints, it is not proposed to set up any new steel plant in the public sector during the VIII five year plan period. In order to bridge the projected gap in demand and availability, it is expected that additional steel production capacities will come up in the private sector. The iron and steel industry his been de-regulated and also exempted from the requirements of compulsory licencing. It is expected that finished steel production in the secondary steel sector will increase from about 6.70 million tonnes in 1992-93 to about 11 million tonnes in 1996-97.

Setting up Steel Plant in Public Sector

197. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a final decision to the effect that henceforth Steel Plants would not be set up in the public sector; and

(b) if so, the detalis thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) In view of the limited availability of resources, there is no proposal to set up new steel plants is the public sector during the Eighth Plan Period. The resources available to the steel sector in the Eighth Plan are to be utilised for the modernisation and expansion of the existing steel plants in the public sector.

Sail Improvement in Production

198. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has claimed an all round improvement in production during 1992-93;

(b) whether it is also a fact that figures of production of saleable steel brought out by SAIL show that production in 1992-93 has actually come down in comparison to the period in 1991-92 over 1990-91; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir. SAIL Plants have shown all around improvement in production in 1992-93.